

Each one of us has the duty to continue to support these meaningful measures and work within our communities to decrease the prevalence and death rate of breast cancer. In October and in every other month of the year we must continue the fight to educate both men and women about breast cancer and to eradicate this disease.

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HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 25, 2005*

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month which just ended. I want to once again acknowledge and appreciate this ever growing community.

In Congress, I have always held the concerns of the Latino community as my own. I am a Member of the Hispanic Working Group organized by Democratic Leader NANCY PELOSI, and am a member of the Tri-Caucus, which is the collection of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, Congressional Black Caucus, and the Asian Pacific American Caucus. Through these Congressional organizations, and through the legislation I introduce and support, I look for ways to improve the lives for Latinos, particularly in Healthcare, Education, Housing, and other areas.

In my district, the 9th Congressional District of California, the contributions of Latino members of the community are stronger than ever. The Latino community is active and engaged throughout the District, State, and beyond. For example, Gabriela Franco, Vice President/Bank manager for Bank of the West was born in a small town in Mexico. Her parents brought her family to live in the United States when she was just 5 years old. She is the first person in her entire family to earn a college degree. Like so many other Latinas, Gabriela

has a passion for giving back to the community in any way she can. Gabriela sits on the advisory board for three non profit organizations, Operation Hope, Women's Initiative for Self Employment (WISE) and the Ora Lee Brown Foundation. She volunteers with different organizations in my community, including Wardrobe for Opportunity and the ALAS program for WISE.

WISE is a private, non-profit agency providing comprehensive business training, ongoing technical assistance and financing for Bay Area low-income women. Their programs are designed to assist an entrepreneur in gaining the necessary skills to start, grow and/or expand her business. Among the many successful graduates of WISE is Eva Saavedra. Eva and her husband Juan began their business from their home offering food to her neighbors. She met with instant success and after three years, with the assistance of WISE and the Unity Council, she was able to purchase the necessary equipment to open her own restaurant, El Huarache Azteca. El Huarache Azteca has been recognized by the Oakland Tribune and the San Francisco Chronicle as one of the finest Mexican restaurants in the Bay Area.

Another example is Terry Alderete; Terry has been a leader and mentor for many years. Terry has served on the board of the Chicano-Latino Youth Leadership Project, (CLYLP) which was established in 1982 to prepare Latino high school students to actively participate in California's economic, social, and political development in the 21st century and beyond. Terry has been instrumental in securing funding for CLYLP which has served countless Latino students including members of my staff. Terry serves as the Northern Region Director of the California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and as the Vice President of the Alameda County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. In addition, Terry is the coordinator of the largest Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) and Cinco de Mayo celebrations in the

United States. Terry has managed to make these events as the premier family-oriented, alcohol-free, large-scale free festival in the East Bay, celebrating cultural traditions, diversity, and the arts in a fun and safe environment. Because of the popularity, diversity, and historical importance of the Dia de los Muertos festival, I inducted the festival into the Library of Congress as a local legacy in the State of California.

Individuals in my district are the motivating force behind the remarkable organizations that promote civic engagement among Latinos in the 9th Congressional District. Leaders like Jesus Rodriguez, an Oakland Community Organization field representative, who organizes informational town hall meetings on health care, education, and immigration for the Latino community. Belen Pulido, an Berkeley Organizing Congregations for Action field representative, helps BOCA fulfill its mission of creating a coalition of interfaith congregations throughout the city of Berkeley to come together to dialog the need of faith support in the wider Berkeley area. Belen's leadership has been instrumental in having BOCA meeting the needs of the Latino community by persuading Berkeley High School in the English Language Learners program to translate forms and documents into Spanish for parents. In addition, Belen has organized immigration town halls and fundraiser for the School of the Americas organization.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few examples, but I hope that this Congress will acknowledge the contributions of the Latino community to our nation. Our differences should not divide us; rather, they should be bringing us together in celebration of what this nation is about. The work of people like Belen Pulido, Terry Alderete, Eva Saavedra, and Gabriela Franco, set a shining example for the next generation of leaders of not just the Latino community, but of this nation as a whole.